

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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### **HINCHEY ASSAILS BUSH SUPPLEMENTAL SPENDING PLAN**

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) sharply criticized the \$74.7 billion supplemental appropriations request released by the White House today. The supplemental was necessary since the Bush Administration failed to anticipate the costs of the war in Iraq in previous budgets.

"Just days ago when we were considering the budget resolution for fiscal year 2004, the administration said they couldn't possibly guess at what the war would cost," said Hinchey, a member of the House Appropriations Committee. "Now suddenly the White House can not only guess at it, but they've put a price tag on both the conflict and its immediate aftermath. There can be no doubt that this information was previously withheld in order to ensure passage of the president's irresponsible tax cut."

In addition to funds directly connected to military operations in Iraq, homeland security and antiterrorism efforts, President Bush's proposal also requests billions in international aid. This includes \$2.1 billion to strengthen the military forces of "coalition partners" and \$2.4 billion in direct economic assistance to Jordan, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Egypt.

"In the first Persian Gulf War a true coalition existed," Hinchey added. "Our allies agreed with our actions and paid a share of the costs. This time we have to bribe other countries for their explicit or tacit endorsement of the war. The White House request actually has a budget line of \$250 million to help Jordan close its budget gap. What about our budget gap, or that of New York and most other states?"

In an unprecedented move, the supplemental calls for the creation of a new, flexible account under the auspices of the Executive Office of the President for relief and reconstruction in postwar-Iraq. The White House has requested \$2.4 billion for this account. This draws additional attention to the administration's awarding of contracts in Iraq to corporations with White House ties.

"Already we have seen significant contracts for work in Iraq go to Halliburton, the company the vice president used to run," Hinchey said. "Normally development funds flow through the State Department, removed from blatant political favoritism. Under this new request, the White House could distribute contracts as it pleases. Once again, the president is asking Congress for blank check."

Hinchey also criticized the relative lack of assistance to the states for homeland security. Of the \$74.7 billion requested by the White House, only \$2 billion would go to the states for that purpose.